

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate having a Cetane number higher than 70, the process including:

(a) separating the products obtained from synthesis gas via a FT synthesis reaction into one or more heavier fraction and one ~~or more~~ lighter fraction, wherein the one or more heavier fraction boils above 270°C and the one lighter fraction boils in the range of C₅ to 270°C;

(b) catalytically processing the heavier fraction under conditions which yield one or more middle distillate;

(c) separating the middle distillate product of step (b) from a light product fraction and a heavier product fraction which are also produced in step (b); and

(d) blending the middle distillate fraction obtained in step (c) with at least a portion of the one ~~or more~~ lighter fraction of step (a), or products thereof; and

(e) hydrotreating at least some of the one ~~or more~~ light fraction of step (a), or products thereof, prior to step (d).

2. (Original) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the catalytic processing of step (b) is a hydroprocessing step.

3. (Original) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 2, wherein the catalytic processing of step (b) is a hydrocracking step.

4. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, including one or more additional step of fracitonating at least some of the one ~~or more~~ lighter fraction of step (a), or products thereof, prior to step (d).

5-8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in [[7]]1, wherein the one or more catalytically processed heavier fraction of step (b) has a isoparaffins to n-paraffins mass ratio of between 4:1 and 14:1.
10. (Currently amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in [[8]]1, wherein the one or more catalytically processed heavier fraction of step (b) has a isoparaffins to n-paraffins mass ratio of 21:2.
11. (Original) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the one or more heavier fraction of step (a) boils above about 300°C.
12. (Canceled)
13. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim [[12]]1, wherein the one ~~or more~~ lighter fraction boils in the range 160°C to 270°C.
14. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim [[12]]1, wherein the one or more lighter fraction has an isoparaffins to n-paraffins mass ratio of between 1:2 and 4:1.
15. (Original) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 14, wherein the one or more lighter fraction has an isoparaffins to n-paraffins mass ratio of 2.2:1.
16. (Original) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the product of step (d) boils in the range 100°C to 400°C.
17. (Original) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the product of step (d) boils in the range 160°C to 370°C.

18. (Original) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the product of step (d) is a diesel fuel which has a CFPP below -20°C.

19. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 18, wherein the product of step (d) is obtained by mixing the middle distillate fraction obtained in step (c) with at least a portion of the one-~~or more~~ lighter fraction of step (a), or products thereof, in a volume ratio selected to provide a diesel fuel having a required specification.

20. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 19, wherein the product of step (d) is obtained by mixing the middle distillate fraction obtained in step (c) with at least a portion of the one-~~or more~~ lighter fraction of step (a), or products thereof, in a volume ratio of between 1:1 and 9:1.

21. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 20, wherein the product of step (d) is obtained by mixing the middle distillate fraction obtained in step (c) with at least a portion of the one-~~or more~~ lighter fraction of step (a), or products thereof, in a volume ratio of between 2:1 and 6:1.

22. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 19, wherein the product of step (d) is obtained by mixing the middle distillate fraction obtained in step (c) with at least a portion of the one-~~or more~~ lighter fraction of step (a), or products thereof, in a volume ratio of 84:16.